GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1841
ANSWERED ON:09.03.2016
New Route for Mansarovar
Patel Smt. Jayshreeben

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of countries which are participating in Mansarovar pilgrimage traditionally during the last three years;

(b) whether the new route for the pilgrimage has since been opened and become operational;

(c) if so, the details thereof and the number of pilgrims expected to be benefitted every year from the new route; and

(d) the arrangements made by the Government to facilitate the smooth passage of pilgrims via the new route?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
[GEN. (DR) V. K. SINGH (RETD)]

(a) Ministry of External Affairs organizes the Kailash Manasarovar Yatra in cooperation with the State Governments of Uttarakhand, Delhi, and Sikkim along with Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP). The Kumaon Mandal Vikas Nigam Limited (KMVN), and Sikkim Tourism Development Cooperation (STDC) make logistical arrangements including accommodation, food, and transport on the Indian side for the Yatra. Since 1981 the Yatra is organized in cooperation with the Government of China which provides logistical facilities on the Tibet side.

(b) A new route via Nathu La Pass in Sikkim has become operational in 2015.

(c) In 2015 a total of 216 Yatris had travelled in five batches on the new route via Nathu La for this Yatra. This year 7 batches are planned of 50 Yatris each.

(d) Government of India takes various steps to facilitate the Yatra which include a dedicated website to further simplify and expedite the registration and selection process, communication with Yatris, and a helpline based on Interactive Voice Response System which provides information in Hindi and English to the Yatris. Medical tests are also conducted for Yatris to ensure their fitness for high altitude endurance. Provision for air-lift of Yatris by helicopter is also available in coordination with concerned agencies in case of emergency. One Liaison Officer is appointed for each batch. The Liaison Officer stays in touch with Indian and Chinese authorities concerned and seeks assistance in case of any emergency for the safety and well-being of Yatris. The Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) provides security cover and basic medical assistance to Yatris on the Indian side. Facilities are upgraded on a continuous basis along the entire route of the Yatra.